

Will Your Individuality Show During The Bicentennial?

By EDWARD F. SAYLE

(Editor's Note: At the request of your editor for Bi-centennial information, Mrs. Frank L. Ball asked Mr. Edward F. Sayle to compose an article regarding the Bicentennial. Mr. Sayle is Chairman of the Arlington County Historical Commission, and a member of the county's Bicentennial Commission, Vice-Chairman for the Bicentennial Committee of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Hence, the following challenging article written especially for Farm and Garden members.)

FEDERAL PROGRAMS will not make the Bicentennial of our nation's independence a success. Nor will guidance from state and community planners. The key to making the Bicentennial year worthy of our nation's heritage or greatness will be our country's greatest asset — the American people. It is the American spirit of individuality, the real "spirit of '76", which will trigger programs and activities highlighting the great events of the past from which our nation evolved. And, it will be that same spirit of individuality which will make the Bicentennial year an exciting era.

Anne Armstrong, Counsellor to the President and chief Presidential advisor on the Bicentennial, foresees an era "as diverse, as colorful, and as varied as America itself," with the Bicentennial of our nation's birth celebrated in "your own backyards, your neighborhoods, on every Main Street and rural route in the country," in what she predicts will be a massive outpouring of citizen interest and action. With her hand on the pulse of the spirit of individuality which distinguishes Americans, she sees "festivals and fun — sparklers and fireworks — but even more important, it will be ideas that will not sputter and die, but whose glow will last and improve our quality of life as we enter our third century." Mrs. Armstrong, the first woman to serve as a counsellor to a President, recognizes that the scope of grassroots participation will be far the most exciting part of the Bicentennial celebration, and told newsmen recently that the Bicentennial will *not* be "invented in Washington, printed in

triplicate by the Government printing office, mailed to you by the U.S. Postal Service, and filed away in your public library." To her, "the Bicentennial is human, it is alive, and everyone has an opportunity to be part of it."

When the parades are over and the inspiring anthems have faded, what will be left to remind us of the nation's two-hundredth birthday? What will be the "glow" — the ideas — which will not "sputter and die?" That rests with individuals, acting singly or in concert with others. If we were to be content to sit back and "watch" rather than "observe" the Bicentennial, there would be no such after-glow to light our way through the next 100 years. Fortunately, the American will, the desire to express one's ideas, the inner need to exercise our rights to the fullest, our *individuality* will not only glow, but will flame with ideas.

We must remind ourselves that the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are just as valid today and will be just as valid tomorrow, as they were when our nation was founded. Perhaps, it is our duty to remind other Americans of that validity, maybe even to help them discover it.

Almost two-hundred years ago, brave men gathered to pledge "their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor" to take that bold step which was to become the United States of America. Nine of those 56 Americans died of wounds or hardship during the War for Independence; five were captured or imprisoned; the wives, sons and daughters of others were killed, jailed, mistreated, persecuted or left penniless. The homes of twelve were burned to the ground; seventeen lost all they owned. Each was declared a traitor and hunted, driven into flight from home and family. Most of them were offered immunity, freedom, rewards, return of properties, release of loved ones and the King's protection to break that pledge. But, no signer of the Declaration of Independence faltered or changed his stand through the darkest hours. Their fortunes were forfeited, but not their honor. They gave us a Republic. The price of that individual freedom came high to these men, just as it did to many of



their fellow-countrymen then, and as it has since that time to those who have struggled to maintain those hard-won freedoms. Is it not our obligation to dedicate some individual act during the Bicentennial era to renew that sacred pledge of honor?

How do we go about it? How do we leave our mark, a record of our dedication to the American thesis? Look about you with the thought in mind, "What can *I* do, what can *we* do?" There are several themes for the Bicentennial to guide our deliberations. There is "Heritage, '76," a summons to recall our heritage and place it in perspective by re-examining our origins, our values and the meaning of America — a chance to take pride in our accomplishments and to dramatize our development. Next, there is "Festival, '76" an opportunity to celebrate the full meaning of it all, to program activities and events to share with others, both from home and abroad, our discovery. It is our opportunity to invite the people of the world the blood lines which flow through our veins — to celebrate our proud past and to share our dreams of a brighter future. In his invitation to the World, the President saw the Bicentennial as a time for all Americans to say to all the nations of the World, "You helped to make us what we are. Come and see what wonders your countrymen have worked in this new country of ours."

We might also address "Horizons, '76" a challenge for us to undertake projects, either individually or with others, which manifest the pride, the priorities and the hopes of our nation, pooling resources in constructive effort to demonstrate con-

cern for a "more perfect Union," for human welfare, happiness and freedom in true spirit of '76.

Use the power of the individual to "talk up" your ideas, in the home, in your clubs and churches, and in your community. Insist that your community develop a concrete plan for the Bicentennial and attain recognition from American Revolution Bicentennial Administration as a "Bicentennial community". And, offer your services and those of your organization to make such dreams a reality. Your Association's tree planting projects are an apt implementation of the "Horizons, '76," theme. Did not Alexander Smith tell us that "A man does not plant a tree for himself, he plants it for posterity." And is it not particularly symbolic of the Bicentennial when we recall it was under the "Liberty Tree" in Boston the colonists met to plan resistance against British tyranny in pre-Revolutionary days — so symbolic, in fact, that the "Liberty Tree" appears on the reverse of the first Bicentennial medal issued by our nation's Bicentennial program. In pursuing such a program on a national level you are responding to Thomas Payne's call in 1775: "From East to West, in defense of our Liberty Tree." No longer are Americans truly called upon to defend that historic landmark; Thomas Payne's challenge tells us to defend our natural environment by planting Bicentennial trees for posterity!

But, does such a national program by your organization truly satisfy your *individual* desire to do something more? Is there still not more to be done to translate the fine ideals behind that plan into a "Horizons, '76" effort in your own community? Cannot your spirit of individuality conceive something more in the "Spirit of '76"? Think about it, then act.

(After reading a copy of Woman's National Farm and Garden Magazine and other material provided by Mrs. Ball about our Association, Mr. Sayle commented in a letter to Mrs. Ball "I quickly became aware that the Association's ladies are true individualists in the finest American sense, and took that approach in addressing the Bicentennial and its goals. They appear to be women, like yourself, who recognize a challenge, accept it and then proceed to do something about it, not resting on past laurels and letting the world glide past them. If the Bicentennial is truly to be a success it will be ladies like these who make it so!")

TREES

What Others Are Doing for the Bicentennial

THE AMERICAN Forest Institute is selecting seeds from trees that played a role in America's history — The Charter Oak in Hartford; the Treaty Tree at Annapolis; the Monroe Pine near Charlottesville; Kings Pine in Hiram, Maine; the Kit Carson Elm Tree near Halstead, Kansas; the Sam Houston Tree at Huntsville, Texas and the Lincoln Oak at Hodgenville, Kentucky. They plan to preserve seedlings from these trees until 1976, when the seedlings will be planted at appropriate locations and in appropriate Bicentennial ceremonies. They hope also to contribute other seedlings which exemplify the importance of the forest to the nation's development: the white pine, the white oak, the Eastern hemlock, the live oak, the Douglas fir and the common apple tree.

A modern Johnny Appleseed project in Pennsylvania involves 500 volunteers planting dogwood trees some 20 feet apart along both sides of a Dogwood Trail which will extend twenty-five miles from Valley Forge Park to the Borough of Elverson.

A small town in Iowa is planting trees on the village green in anticipation of the opening of a mini-park during the Bicentennial. Chapters of the Children of the American Revolution are concentrating on the planting of pine seedlings to commemorate our nation's two-hundredth birthday.

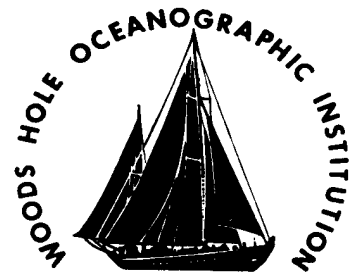
Residents of Green County, Iowa, hope to plant 17,760 trees by 1976.

Special plantings of seedlings from Maryland's historic Wye Oak are a personal project of a Maryland state forester.

One of the most ambitious undertakings is the development of the Freedoms Foundation's Medal of Honor Grove at Valley Forge. The grove, to be completed in time for the nation's 200th anniversary, will contain 52 acres of natural woodlands to serve as a living memorial to recipients of the nation's highest military decoration — the Medal of Honor. National Sojourners, a military-Masonic-patriotic organization is spearheading the campaign to raise funds to complete the grove. It has been proposed that each chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution raise a symbolic \$1776 toward its completion. The

American Legion Department of Missouri, had led the campaign to raise perpetual-care funds. The General Foundation of Women's Clubs of America has contributed a building as a Medal of Honor Archives. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania has contributed a nine-foot bronze statue of General George Washington kneeling in prayer. The Kiwanis International has contributed a Patriot's Path and a pentagonal monument has been presented by the Navy Mother's Clubs of America.

Farm and Garden plans for the Bicentennial will be announced in the September issue of the magazine.



FOR SOME 200 MILLION YEARS, LIMULUS POLYPHEMUS HAS BEEN CRAWLING AROUND THE COASTAL AREAS OF THE EARTH — THIS ANIMAL IS BETTER-KNOWN AS THE HORSESHOE CRAB RESEARCH AT THE WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION REPORTS THAT THE BLUE BLOOD OF THIS OLDEST SPECIES ON EARTH IS BEING STUDIED AS A BIOMEDICAL RESOURCE (IN THE TREATMENT OF CANCER) AND FOR EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF POLLUTION IN WATER.

(New England Advertisement)